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In Memoriam.

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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY



COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES

AT

THE FUNERAL

OF

Mrs. Sarah Woodruff Davis,

BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS,

November 15th, 1879.

In Memoriam.

MRS. SARAH WOODRUFF DAVIS, daughter of the late Judge William P. Walker of Lenox, Massachusetts, was born in Lenox, September 4th, 1814.

She was educated at New Haven and Hartford; in the latter place, under the instructions of Catharine and Harriet Beecher.

On the 30th of October, 1838, she was united in marriage with Mr. David Davis of Cecil County, Maryland, who, having read law in the office of Judge Henry W. Bishop of Lenox, had settled in Illinois, in the practice of his profession, in the Fall of 1835.

After her marriage, Mrs. Davis accompanied her husband to his home in Bloomington, where she has continued to reside for more than forty years.

Two children now survive her, George Perrin Davis of Bloomington, Illinois, and Mrs. Sarah D. Swayne of Toledo, Ohio.

In the month of August, 1879, she visited the sea-shore for the benefit of her health, but not de-

riving the advantage expected, she went to her native County in Massachusetts, where she was taken seriously ill with a disease of the heart ; and after lingering for many weeks, she sank into the repose of death. She died, November 9th, 1879, in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, at the residence of D. R. Williams, Esq., whose wife is a sister of Mrs. Davis.

An old Spanish proverb expresses the truth that, inasmuch as we have to die, it is sweet to die at home. Near to the home of her infancy, in the house of a beloved sister, surrounded by her husband and children and other relatives, her blessed spirit returned to God who gave it.

On Tuesday, November 11th, appropriate services were conducted at the house of Mr. Williams, by the Rev. Dr. Parker of the Episcopal Church ; at the conclusion of which, the remains of Mrs. Davis were taken to Bloomington.

The funeral took place at the family residence, at eleven o'clock on Saturday, November 15th, 1879, and the services were conducted by the Rev. W. G. Pierce of Champaign, Illinois, and the Rev. John Maclean, formerly Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, where Mrs. Davis was accustomed to worship.

The services were introduced with the singing of a chant, "Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord;" after which Mr. Maclean read the following selections from the Scriptures:

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? For what is your life? It is even a vapor which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.

Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. Happy is the man whom God correcteth. He maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth and his hands make whole. Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasten-

eth not. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no ; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart ; wait, I say, on the Lord. Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither

let it be afraid. I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth ; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them.

The reading of the Scriptures was followed by prayer offered by Mr. Pierce, and by the singing of the hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

The officiating Ministers then delivered the following addresses :

ADDRESS OF REV. W. G. PIERCE.

"Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." This, to-day is the language of the heart of those from whom one has been taken who, for a lifetime, had been life of life, thought of thought, and heart of heart. It is the language of us all. I have lost a friend. So have you all. This is a

gathering of friends, for none knew our deceased Sister but to love her. We sit down together in the shadow of a great sorrow. We can scarcely think of anything but our loss. Such at least is my experience. I can only feel that the world is less to me than it was. A light, a strength, a courage, a friend has gone from me. Yet our faith bids us look up from the ruins of earthly hopes and joys, in still abiding confidence in God. If our eyes are dim with tears, and cannot penetrate the clouds above us to the brightness beyond, we can sit here under the clouds and listen to these words coming thence: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

Yes, *blessed* are the dead who die in the Lord. *They* at least are blessed. Though the heart clings tenaciously to those it loves, when the word is given, "Come up higher," we must believe it is *blessed* to go. Then the wider, clearer vision comes. They see the solution of many of the mysteries of life. Its trials, burdens, and sorrows are then known to be less than the griefs and pain of the child under the discipline of a tender mother. How calm and restful our Sister must

be, looking back on us with more than all of her old tenderness, knowing that if our way is rugged and weary and lonely, it is a short one to heights more serene than our hearts are able to conceive. Yes, blessed are these dead. They have now the perfect knowledge that they and we have always had a Heavenly Father, and that we have ever been dwelling under the shadow of his wings. They have learned the boundless tenderness, compassion, and sacrifice that were in that Father from the foundation of the world, and to which he gave expression in the incarnation of his Son, Christ Jesus. They can comprehend that all of God's ways with us—the disciplines of life, the penalties of sin, the rewards of virtue and trust—are the outflow of infinite goodness. This dear one has found the Eternal Father for herself. Her heart's best hopes, hopes "despite of fears," have been vindicated. She died in the Lord, having proved her faith by the Master's test,—“By their fruits ye shall know them.” On Sunday night, November 9th, with her afflicted husband and son and daughter by her side, and surrounded by her kindred, Mrs. Davis passed from this to a brighter world, sustained by that Christian faith in which from her youth she had lived.

Affection has the privilege of the hour, and yet that very affection almost forbids the utterance of that which wells up unbidden from my heart. Let me, then, speak only in such terms as shall briefly illustrate the life of her whom we mourn to-day.

When Sarah Woodruff Walker, forty years ago, pledged her faith and gave her hand to David Davis, she left a home where she had been carefully nurtured, surrounded by a large circle of friends, in one of the most charming places this land affords. She left father and mother, brothers and sisters, and abundant opportunities for social enjoyment and culture, and came cheerfully with her husband to this, at that time, really new country, and to this place, then a little village of five hundred inhabitants. Amid changing events, he has never passed through any rough place but she has been courageously by his side. He has had no sorrows or trials which she did not choose to help him bear ; and no joy of life into which she did not enter with full heart. Her life was as free and as full of heart content in the little cottage that first gave them shelter, and her welcome to friends, as genuine and graceful, as here where, in these later years, she has dispensed such abundant and kindly hospitality. With added years,

she has always grown to the measure of new and added duties. I hardly need tell you this, for she has been identified with this place during almost its entire history, growing in influence and in the ministry of love, as the social circle enlarged, and its duties became greater.

She carried with her the same power to attract friends abroad that she had at home ; and messages of sympathy and sense of loss come to us from all over the land. No place was so high, none so humble, which she could not fill and grace. The secret of this was genuineness. "She did nothing that she did not do well," said one to me, since she died. George McDonald says : "To know one person who is positively to be trusted, will do more for a man's moral nature, yea, for his spiritual nature, than all the sermons he has ever heard, or ever will hear." All who have come within the pure atmosphere of Mrs. Davis' life, have felt this wholesome influence. She was wholly genuine and trustworthy. She did her duty as she saw it, but she saw it not so much a word to be spoken, as something to be done. I doubt if those about her ever heard her say much about duty, or ever thought that she failed to do it. If there were any promptings needed, any

courage to be strengthened, any challenge of herself to be faithful to the gifts and opportunities God had given her, they were sought in her secret communings with Him who has promised, that as our day is our strength shall be. Life was a rich gift which she accepted with the loving confidence of one who never questioned the wisdom of God. It was something by which to bless and to be blessed. For her the sun did not shine in vain, nor in vain did the flowers bloom, nor earth spread out its landscapes, nor the sky its brighter hues. They wrought within her a "kindred order" and beauty. There always sprang up around her, responsively to her touch, order, grace, and beauty.

But her human sympathies were her charm, and were as strong as they were wise. She entered freely into human aspirations, hopes, and plans. She loved the society of the young, for whom she always kept her heart fresh and warm, and for whom she had strong attraction. None ever associated with her without feeling quickened and strengthened for a true and useful life. She was quick to feel the misfortunes of others; and had what I have sometimes thought the rarer virtue of sympathy with their successes and joys. You have many unrecognized mourners in your midst who

feel that they have lost their best and truest friend on earth. It was to her they went with their cares and sorrows, and from her received kindness and help in their distress. There are no more sincere mourners to-day than some who have been encouraged and relieved by her in their dark hours. And she was careful never to humiliate a soul with her gifts. She rather ennobled and honored those who received them. All here to-day, rise up to pronounce a blessing on her memory. Identified with your culture, your society, your benefactions, her life was a silver weft woven into the warp of your history. All loved her, and she had not an enemy in the world.

There is one most sacred place on earth—home. It is our place of rest. There we find our serenest joys. There we unfold our characters, and are most efficient in molding the characters of others. The sweetest fragrance that ascends to Heaven arises from the home offerings that affection and sacrificing love lay upon its altar. From this first and best church, the sweetest heart music goes up to God. And this was to our Sister the dearest place on earth. She never neglected the duties of society. She was the unwavering friend, but home was her chosen sanctuary, and only there

could she be thoroughly known. Friendship was a sacred bond, but domestic love a perpetual sacrament. From the time she pledged her faith to him with whom she has journeyed through four decades, domestic life and love were to her the supremest earthly good. Blessed homes! Her's at least was a resting place, and she was the center of its life. It gave a light that radiated far beyond the home circle. So should it ever be. From these quiet centers, where our plans and hopes are put to the test of purity and truth, go forth the saving influences in society and in the State.

We are, this day, in the midst of the handiwork of our friend. The impress of her presence is all about us. These walls and their adornments, this order and beauty, are the mute but eloquent witnesses of what she was. We are ready to hear her step, receive her greeting, and feel the breath of her presence. Around this home she carefully trained the foliage and flowers. She delighted to live among "the roses and the lilies." Her garden of flowers was never so beautiful as this Autumn, waiting to give her a welcome home. Alas! the Autumn frosts have laid low both them and her. Instinctively have friends done the most fit thing in this marvelous floral offering. She will be

borne to her final resting place from her home, embosomed in the flowers she loved so well, but her impress and presence abide with us in the lives she has enriched.

One of the most pleasing things I have to say at this time is, that her life was a happy one. She was content with her lot in the earlier days, and as new good came, she freely accepted and enjoyed it. All she had was held as a sacred trust, with no morbid feelings about its use. She followed cheerfully the Master in living for others; and neither declining health nor growing years restrained her benevolence or slackened her hand from doing the things concerning which the Master has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

But why do I linger from saying the final word? She has gone, and we cannot recall her; but we can thank God that, for his own appointed time, we had the dear gift.

"Whatever's lost, it first was won;
We will not struggle, nor impugn:
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show more clear."

Yes, she is gone. And yet she remains. Her life was not wasted. It was a good life, well

rounded out with daily duties and daily blessings. To-day is the hour for duty, the hour to form character, the time to bless and to be blessed. We pile up the yesterdays and the to-morrows as though all of our good lay in the one or the other. No, this is the hour. Now is the accepted time.

“Why do we heap huge mounds of years
 Before us and behind;
 And scorn the little days that pass,
 Like angels on the wind?”

We may scarcely enter the sacred precincts of a husband's grief, but we can sit down beside you, my Brother, and touch your hand in sympathy, and say, “We too are afflicted; we have lost a friend.” O! my Brother, I know your life seems rent in twain. Everything is changed. You can scarcely adjust your thoughts and feelings. You care not to think of the morrow before you. But, my Brother, God is good. He has been good to you. He gave you a wife who has been your joy and peace and rest. Her life has been precious to you and to your children and to God; and precious also in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. And now that she is gone, she has left the benediction of a wife on you, the benediction of a mother on your children, the benediction of a friend on us all. Your heart is sore, and there

are long sober hours before you, but you know what she would say; yea, though dead, she does speak with all the tenderness of past years, "Husband, live on. It has been good for me to live; it is good for you. Duties are before you; meet them courageously and hopefully. Bear the cross in Christ's name; his yoke is easy and his burden light."

As a mother, she has bequeathed to you, her children, a holy legacy of love and of duty done. You will find it the sweetest and most sanctifying of your memories. To-day, you can only think of the loss, and feel the sorrow; but to recall her words and deeds, to linger over her portrait—shadow of her presence—will, by and by, bring you holy peace. God bless and comfort you all.

My friends, although our lives may be fruitful and rich in good works, let us not live as though time bounded our horizon. It is good to live, if we live well. There is a dawn of Heaven in such life. If life here is matched on to Eternity, if it is the first step in the ladder that leads to the summit, then it has value. But if the present is all we are living for, if our hopes are hedged in and measured by the few hours we live on this earth, then how valueless! Only a life whose good is to

be perpetuated, is a blessing. The sun of this life has not set. These departing ones disappear to earth and appear in glory. She who has now gone had a happy and beautiful life in this world, and all the more does she now delight in the scenes and employments of Heaven. Our duties in the present are our highest privileges, and are the gateway to peace here and to glory hereafter. Let us shape the present to the future, our lives now for the life eternal. Let us live having our lamps trimmed and our lights burning, for we know not the day or the hour when the Son of Man cometh.

And so farewell, loved Wife; farewell dearest Mother; farewell, Sister, Friend. Farewell.

ADDRESS OF REV. JOHN MACLEAN.

Another of the sad days of my life has come. Scarcely can I trust myself to give utterance to my emotions; and as now we are drawing so near to the last of these sad ceremonies, I am the more thankful that I had limited myself to a few brief words of affectionate sympathy. Rather would I turn aside, and weep, and be silent.

Afflictions have swept over me, in days gone by, and left me mourning and desolate. I have known

the grief of a father stricken and bereaved of his children. But here is a new experience. I am stricken and bereaved of a cherished friend, of one whose tender, practical sympathy in the time of our sorrow, and whose generous heart and beautiful life, during these many years of our association, endeared her to every member of my house. Instinctively, for a moment, we think of this as it affects ourselves; and the cry of anguish is wrung, first of all, from our consciousness of personal calamity. I am, to-day, mourning my own loss; and in thus expressing my sense of my deep bereavement in this mystery of death, I know that I speak for all who are here to render their last sad tribute of affectionate remembrance.

But what is our loss compared with that of him who mourns a beloved, devoted wife? of those who mourn a beloved, faithful mother? To have the light of our life extinguished, the joy of our heart blighted, the companion of our younger and riper years stricken away from our side—to have suddenly taken from our very arms the dearest object of our love, and to know that the grave will cover it from our sight forever in this life—this is the climax of Death's sorrowful work. The sense of our bereavement becomes lost in the thought

of this deeper bereavement, and we cease to grieve for ourselves as we see the darker shadow of grief covering these agonized hearts. Yes, we turn to weep with those who here weep ; and as our tears of sympathy mingle with theirs, we press the hands of our stricken friends, and commend them to the gracious keeping of Him who has ever given consolation and peace to the children of sorrow.

It is not a mishap or chance which has fallen to their sad experience. The events of life, be they ever so distressing or joyous, are in no respect independent of Him whose wise providence is over all his creatures. We may be inclined to wonder that with many of his own redeemed, God's providences are sometimes most severe ; but we are sure, from our knowledge of the loving nature of God, and from his own loving word, that he never willingly grieves or afflicts any of the children of men. His ways are the ways of a wise and tender Father, who chastises because he loves, and regards with compassion even while he lays upon us the rod of his correction. It is for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. Before his presence we here humbly bow. In his righteous dealing with us we would most willingly acquiesce. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth

him good. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Nor does he leave us to bear alone the trials of this preparatory life. In all our affliction he is afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saves us. In the darkness of our night of sorrow, and above the storm of our adversities, we may hear his voice :—" It is I, be not afraid." His own assuring promise is to every bereaved, weeping soul :—" I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Here then is the light in the shadow of death, the consolation in this day of bitter and absorbing grief. The compassionate face of a sympathizing Divine Savior beams upon us, though tears may hide the vision. The hand of faith may reach within this overhanging cloud and meet the pressure of the hand of Him who, himself, was " touched with the feeling of our infirmities ;" who wept with the sisters of Bethany at the grave of Lazarus, his friend ; and who, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

But is this all ? Is there no bright side to the providence itself ? Must we look into the face of inexorable Death, and, while we think of our bereavement, take only this consolation, that it is

well because it is the way of a wise God, and we should acquiesce in it ; that it is for our correction and improvement, and we should humbly accept it ; and that we have the sympathy of the correcting Father, and we should not be discouraged ? Is this all ? Nay, there is that in the transformed condition and experiences of our dear dead friend, which more than compensates us for all our anguish in speaking our last farewell, and laying away her precious body to be seen no more on earth. Her life among us was indeed beautiful and praiseworthy—we are witnesses of her lovely character, of her unselfish nature, of her unostentatious, Christian demeanor, of her gentleness and cheerfulness and charity, of her hopefulness and trust and wisdom ; but, as incident to the rarest human virtues, in this sin-blighted world, there are anxieties and disappointments and sicknesses and death ; and in these she shared the common lot of us all. But now, forever, every taint or trace of imperfectness has passed away. To her is no more the consciousness of the trials and failures of earthly life, no more the enfeebled body, the fainting heart, and pang of death. The corruption has put on incorruption, the mortal has put on immortality, and God has wiped away all

her tears. The happiness of heaven is to her no longer a faith, but an experience. Her sanctification is completed in the glorification which assimilates her to Christ. What, though we have here the beautiful earth whose verdure and flowers she loved so well? there, before her wondering eyes, is the more beautiful, radiant Heaven, the "better country," "the Paradise of God," wherein is the river and tree of life. What, though she was identified with the interests of this beautiful city, in whose growth and prosperity and adornment she has rejoiced, these forty years? now she inhabits the City of our God, the holy Jerusalem whose walls are jasper, the foundations of which are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose streets are pure gold, and in the midst of which is the throne of God. Here is the well-appointed, beautiful home which her presence so well adorned and dignified, and in whose quiet, social delights she was always happy; there she dwells in the better mansions of the redeemed, the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Can it be all of sadness to us to-day in view of such a transformation? Nay, in the spirit of her own unselfish life, though we are left to wait and

weep, we lift our eyes and hands to heaven, and bless our God that she is so exalted. We would not, if we could, take from her brow the crown of perfect happiness and heavenly beauty, and call her down even to this lovely home. With all our yearning and moaning for her presence, we would not selfishly wish that her white robe should be laid aside, and that the company of the glorified with whom she now stands before the throne of God, should be exchanged for earth's loveliest and best. Earth is indeed robbed of some of its beauty, but Heaven has this new charm.

And there, at the great white throne, in the image of the glory of her Lord, she waits for you, husband, children, friends. You may go to her, but she shall not return to you. Happy the reunions in the heavenly home, as, one by one, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory! Surely, though to live is Christ, to die is gain. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Surely, it were better to depart and be with Christ. But, walking in the footsteps of the faithful who have gone before us, stimulated to earnestness of purpose and life by their example, and submitting

ourselves to him who knows best "the times and seasons," we wait his will. Patiently let us wait all the days of our appointed time until our change comes, encouraged by the assurance that our life is hid with Christ in God, and that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.

At the conclusion of the addresses, the services at the house were closed by singing the hymn, "Asleep in Jesus, Blessed Sleep."

At the Cemetery, the words of consignment to the grave were spoken, and the parting Benediction was pronounced ; and the body of Mrs. Davis, sacred in the memory of all who knew her, now lies beneath the sod, under the fallen leaves, awaiting its resurrection at the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

